

CD 2004 -- 33/34
Monday, March 1, 2004
7 pm. Walter Hall

University of Toronto
Faculty of Music
Chamber Music Series
Presents

St. Lawrence String Quartet

Geoff Nuttall, violin
Barry Shiffman, violin
Lesley Robertson, viola
Christopher Costanza, cello

PROGRAMME

Samuel Barber
(1910-1981)

Dover Beach, Op. 3
for voice and string quartet

Giles Tomkins, baritone

Mark Applebaum
(b. 1967)

20 for string quartet (world première)

INTERMISSION

Felix Mendelssohn
(1809-1847)

Octet in E flat, Op. 20

Allegro moderato, ma con fuoco
Andante
Scherzo: Allegro leggierissimo
Presto

*St. Lawrence String Quartet with
Amanda Goodburn and Jennifer Burford, violins;
Alex McLeod, viola & Rafael Hoekman, cello*

The Chamber Music Series has received generous support from the estate of the late Ruby Halpern and The Wolfe and Millie Goodman Foundation.

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St. Lawrence String Quartet



The St. Lawrence String Quartet has held the position of Visiting Artists with the University of Toronto Faculty of Music since 1994. This initiative was originally funded by a grant from the OAC. The role of the quartet has been to interact with a diverse group of students representing the various divisions of the Faculty. This has included workshopping student compositions, collaborating with performance students not only in strings but piano, winds and voice, as well as frequent collaborative performances with the University's distinguished faculty.

The quartet holds a full-time faculty appointment at Stanford University where it is the Ensemble-in-Residence. Tonight's presentation of "20" by Stanford University professor Mark Applebaum is part of an ongoing exchange program between the University of Toronto and Stanford. This program aims to share the creative voices of these two prestigious schools through a continuing series of visits – the University of Toronto has hosted Stanford composition faculty Jonathan Berger and Melissa Hui as well as tonight's composer Mark Applebaum; Stanford was host to University of Toronto professor Christos Hatzis on several occasions, most recently associated with Stanford's commission of a new work titled "My Brother's Keeper" for the SLSQ and Pilobolus Dance Theater. In addition to this exchange of faculty the SLSQ has also welcomed a number of University of Toronto students to their summer seminar held at Stanford to focus on the advanced study of chamber music.

Programme Notes

Dover Beach

SAMUEL BARBER

*Born in Westchester, Pennsylvania,
in 1910*

Died in New York in 1981

At the age of nine, Samuel Barber wrote a letter to his mother, in which he declared, "I was not meant to be an athlete. I was meant to be a composer, and will be I'm sure." (To underscore his point, the following year he attempted to write an opera.) By the time he was 14 he had convinced his parents to allow him to pursue music full time, as a student at the Curtis Institute in Philadelphia. At Curtis, he studied composition, piano, conducting and singing. Eschewing the radical modernism of his day, Barber developed a tonal but harmonically sophisticated compositional style.

Barber's first published work was his *Serenade* for string quartet, and his second was his *Three Songs*. For his third opus, written when he was 21 years old, he drew upon his compositional experience to compose *Dover Beach* for baritone or contralto and string quartet. A setting of Matthew Arnold's poem of 1867, this single-movement work aptly reflects Arnold's meditation on a world where faith has perished and love is the only path to redemption.

Loosely cast in an ABA form, the outer sections contain undulating phrases in the strings, supporting lyrical vocal lines. Contrasting with this texture is the middle section, in which the vocalist sings a solemn recitative with a chordal accompaniment in the quartet. Opportunities for word-painting are not missed: a melisma on the word "tremulous," a *ritardando* on "slow" and a passionate high F on "joy." The piece

ends with a return of the melancholy wave-like motif heard at the opening.

Dover Beach occupies a middle ground between art-song and chamber music, and may have been influenced by Ralph Vaughan Williams' *On Wenlock Edge*, for tenor, string quartet and piano. In any case, the English composer was impressed with Barber's piece, when he heard it – sung by Barber himself – during a trip to the USA. "He seemed delighted," recalled Barber. "He congratulated me and said, 'I tried several times to set *Dover Beach*, but you really got it!' That was a great boost to me, since praise for my music was not overflowing in those Philadelphia years."

Program notes © 2004 Colin Eatock

DOVER BEACH (1867)

Text by Matthew Arnold

*The sea is calm tonight,
The tide is full, the moon lies fair
Upon the straits; on the French coast the
light
Gleams and is gone; the cliffs of England
stand,
Glimmering and vast, out in the tranquil
bay.
Come to the window, sweet is the night
air!
Only, from the long line of spray
Where the sea meets the moon-blanch'd
land,
Listen! you hear the grating roar
Of pebbles which the waves draw back,
and fling,
At their return, up the high strand,
Begin, and cease, and then again begin,
With tremulous cadence slow, and bring
The eternal note of sadness in.*

continued...

*Sophocles long ago
Heard it on the Aegean, and it brought
Into his mind the turbid ebb and flow
Of human misery; we
Find also in the sound a thought,
Hearing it by this distant northern sea.*

*The Sea of Faith
Was once, too, at the full, and round
earth's shore
Lay like the folds of a bright girdle
furled.
But now I only hear
Its melancholy, long, withdrawing roar;
Retreating, to the breath
Of the night wind, down the vast edges
drear
And naked shingles of the world.*

*Ah, love, let us be true
To one another! for the world, which
seems
To lie before us like a land of dreams,
So various, so beautiful, so new,
Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor
light,
Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for
pain;
And we are here as on a darkling plain
Swept with confused alarms of struggle
and flight,
Where ignorant armies clash by night.*

"20" for String Quartet
MARK APPLEBAUM
Born in Chicago, in 1967

"20" was composed as a gift to my wife Joanie on the occasion of our twentieth anniversary. It consists of twenty continuous movements performed without pause. The listener may subdivide these into four groups of five movements, each group a reading of a common harmonic material and consisting of: one rhythmic movement; one atmospheric, sparse movement; one lyrical movement; one

polyphonic, contrapuntal movement; and one solo movement.

Composing for great players can be exciting, challenging, and rewarding; however, it is even better when those great players happen to be great friends. "20" was composed with joy for the St. Lawrence String Quartet, Stanford colleagues and great friends.

Notes by Mark Applebaum

Octet in E-flat major, Op. 20
FELIX MENDELSSOHN
Born in Hamburg, in 1809
Died in Leipzig, in 1847

It is nothing less than astounding that this brilliant and profound *Octet* was written by a boy of 16 years. However, by 1825 Felix Mendelssohn was an accomplished and experienced composer: already he had written a dozen "practice" symphonies for string orchestra, plus a "real" symphony for full orchestra, numerous chamber works and even an opera. As well, he was an accomplished pianist, organist, conductor and (this is sometimes forgotten) violinist. He studied philosophy, translated Greek and Latin painted, rode horses well – it seems there was nothing he could not do.

Even more remarkably, with this piece the young composer broke new ground, in effect inventing a new genre. Never before had anyone written a chamber work for eight independent string instruments – perhaps the only precedent was a double string quartet written a few years earlier by Louis Spohr. When Spohr heard the *Octet*, he described the young composer's work as "an entirely different art form, in which the two quartets do not vie and alternate with one another in the manner of a double choir, but [in which] all eight instruments work together."

The first movement is a sonata in E-flat major, marked *Allegro moderato, ma con fuoco* – a composition of imposing proportions. Beginning with an athletic, sweeping gesture, it rushes headlong through a succession of themes, temporarily finding repose in a soft and mysterious development section. The second movement, an *Andante* in C minor, is rich and poignant. Bittersweet melodies intermingle with throbbing accompaniments, and towards the end there are some episodes in major tonality, before a final return to dark C minor. The third movement, in G minor, is the earliest example of a Mendelssohnian scherzo: an outpouring of gossamer-light filigrees. “The whole piece is to be played

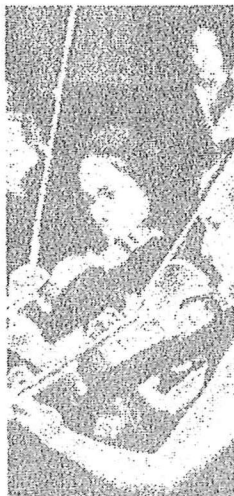
staccato and pianissimo,” Felix told his sister, Fanny, “the tremolandos coming in now and then, the trills passing away with the quickness of lightning.” The finale, back in E-flat major and marked *Presto*, is a frenzied *tour de force*, full of dazzling fugal writing and punctuated with intense rhythmic unisons.

Mendelssohn wrote the *Octet* as a birthday present to a friend, the violinist Eduard Rietz. It was premiered at the elegant Mendelssohn home in Berlin, before an audience of invited guests. Its first public performance took place in Leipzig’s Gewandhaus in 1836, with the composer appearing as one of the violists.

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Imagine Perfect Resonance.

A chord is struck, but never fades, sustained forever.



Kenneth Peacock was a distinguished alumnus of the University of Toronto’s Faculty of Music. His body of work, as a composer and researcher for half a century, has made a significant impact on musical life in Canada. The Faculty of Music was very grateful to learn that Mr. Peacock had made a bequest to the University of Toronto in his will for the benefit of our music programs. With this legacy gift, the Faculty of Music will establish the Kenneth H. Peacock Lecture Series in Music in keeping with his lifelong interest in and contribution to the multi-dimensional study of music. Thank you Mr. Peacock.

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Biographies

Having walked on stage together over 1,800 times in the past fourteen years, the **St. Lawrence String Quartet** has established itself among the world-class chamber ensembles of its generation. In 1992, they won both the Banff International String Quartet Competition and Young Concert Artists Auditions, launching them on a performing career that has carried them across North and South America, Europe, and Asia.

Under an exclusive recording contract with EMI/Angel, the St. Lawrence Quartet's first recording, Schumann's First and Third Quartets, was released in May 1999 to great critical acclaim. The CD received the coveted German critics award, the Preis der Deutschen Schallplattenkritik, as well as Canada's annual Juno Award, granted by the Canadian Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences for "Best Classical Album: Solo or Chamber Ensemble." BBC Music Magazine gave the recording its "highest rating," calling it the benchmark recording of the works. In October of 2001, EMI released their recording of string quartets of Tchaikovsky. In 2002, EMI released their recording *Yiddishbbuk*, featuring the chamber music of the celebrated Argentinean-American composer Osvaldo Golijov, which received two Grammy nominations. Future releases include the complete string quartets of Canadian composer Christos Hatzis.

Highlights of the 02/03 season included a 15-city tour of Europe and an 18-city tour of Australia and New Zealand. The quartet continued its presence in New York with their debut appearances for the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center and Carnegie's Weill Recital Hall. They were in recital at the Metropolitan

Museum in November, and participated in a festival of the music of John Adams presented by Lincoln Center's Great Performers Series in May.

The SLSQ joined forces with the renowned Pilobolus Dance Theatre, in a collaborative evening of music and dance featuring the premiere of *My Brother's Keeper* with music by Christos Hatzis and choreography by Michael Tracy. This exciting collaboration debuted at Stanford University Lively Arts in January 2003, and has toured extensively across North America, including a week-long run at the Joyce Theater in New York this past June.

The SLSQ's summer calendar featured their 300th performance in their 9th year as Resident Quartet at the Spoleto USA Festival in Charleston, South Carolina. Other summer festival appearances have included Music@Menlo in California, the Ottawa and Montréal Chamber Music Festivals, Bay Chamber Concerts in Rockport, Maine, and the Festival of the Sound on the shores of Georgian Bay in Ontario. This fall the quartet appeared in recitals on the campuses of Duke University, University of California Davis, Wesleyan, Wake Forest, University of Massachusetts Amherst, Baylor University and Harvard. Other recitals included Vancouver, Salt Lake, Des Moines, Tucson, Madison, San Jose, Orange County, and College Park, Maryland. The winter will see the quartet return to Europe with recitals in Germany, England, and with continued touring in North America, including a performance through Stanford's Lively Arts program with violinist Joshua Bell and pianist Simon Mulligan on March 14, 2004.

Passionately committed to performing and expanding the works of living composers,

the SLSQ currently has active working relationships with R. Murray Schafer, Osvaldo Golijov, Christos Hatzis, Chan Ka Nin, Jonathan Berger, Melissa Hui, and Mark Applebaum. In addition to tonight's premiere of "20", the quartet will present Jonathan Berger's fourth composition for the SLSQ this summer at Bard College for the Hudson Valley Chamber Music Circle. Last week the SLSQ performed R. Murray Schafer's "4-40" with the CBC Orchestra in Vancouver in a live broadcast across the CBC radio network and 60 European broadcasters with a listening audience of over two million people.

Having been privileged to study with the Emerson, Tokyo, and Juilliard String Quartets, the St. Lawrence are themselves dedicated educators. Since 1998, they have held the position of Ensemble-in-Residence at Stanford University, and have served as Visiting Artists at the University of Toronto since 1996. They direct a chamber music seminar for advanced students and adult amateur musicians at Stanford in the summer, and have presented master classes across North America. Alex Ross of *The New Yorker* magazine writes, "the St. Lawrence are remarkable not simply for the quality of their music making, exalted as it is, but for the joy they take in the act of connection."

THE ST. LAWRENCE STRING QUARTET IS
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Mark Applebaum (b. 1967, Chicago) received his Ph.D. in composition from the University of California at San Diego where he studied principally with Brian Ferneyhough. His solo, chamber, choral,

orchestral, electro-acoustic, and electronic work has been performed throughout the United States, Europe, and Asia with notable performances at the Darmstadt summer sessions, ICMC in Beijing, Italy's Festival Spaziomusica, the Young Nordic Music Festival in Sweden, Sonic Circuits in Hong Kong, Amsterdam's Great Virtuoso Slugfest, SIGGRAPH in Los Angeles, the Essl Museum in Vienna, the Kennedy Center, and at Electronic Music Midwest where served as the 2002 visiting artist.

He has received commissions from Betty Freeman, the Merce Cunningham Dance Company, the Paul Dresher Ensemble, the Vienna Modern Festival, Zeitgeist, MANUFACTURE (Tokyo), the St. Lawrence String Quartet, the Jerome Foundation, and the American Composers Forum, among others. In 1997 Applebaum received the American Music Center's Stephen Albert Award and an artist residency fellowship at the Villa Montalvo artist colony in Northern California.

Since 1990 Applebaum has built electro-acoustic instruments out of junk, hardware, and found objects for use as both compositional and improvisational tools. *Mousetrap Music*, a CD of sound-sculpture improvisations can be heard on the Innova label. Also on Innova is *The Janus ReMixes: Exercises in Auto-Plundering*, a CD of eleven electronic works whose source material corresponds exclusively to recordings of the eleven acoustic compositions that constitute his Janus Cycle (1992-1996). Helen Beldsoe's recording of his flute solo *Entre Funérailles IV* may be heard on the Capstone label.

Applebaum is also active as a jazz pianist and has concertized from Sumatra to the Czech Republic. At present he performs with his father, Robert Applebaum of Chicago, in the Applebaum Jazz Piano Duo. Their first recording, *The*

Apple Doesn't Fall Far from the Tree, is available on Innova. He is assistant professor of composition and theory at Stanford University. Prior to his current appointment, he taught at UC San Diego, Mississippi State University, and Carleton College.

Violinist **Jennifer Burford** is currently in her fourth year of an undergraduate Performance Degree at the University of Toronto under the tutelage of Mark Skazinetzky. She was the recipient of the Nick Gelmych violin scholarship for 2002.

Amanda Goodburn is a student of Erika Raum, in the Master's Degree program at University of Toronto.

Rafael Hoekman received his Bachelor's Degree from U of T in 2002, and is currently in the Master's program studying with Shauna Rolston. Rafael was Teaching Assistant to Scott St. John for Chamber Music for 2002/2003, and a recipient of a Chalmer's Grant for his Master's Degree. He plays on a 1956 Giuseppe Lucci cello kindly on loan from the Banff Centre.

Alex McLeod is currently in his fourth year of the performance program at the University of Toronto's Faculty of Music, where he studies with Kathy Rapoport. He has participated in master classes with Rivka Golani, Steven Dann and Thomas Reibl, and hopes to become a professional chamber musician in the future.

Baritone **Giles Tomkins'** extensive solo experience has included performances with the Toronto Mendelssohn Choir, Opera In Concert, the Aldeburgh Connection, Queen of Puddings, and Baroque Music Beside the Grange. No stranger to the operatic stage, his roles include the title role in Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro*, Don Alfonso (*Così fan Tutte*), Budd (Britten's *Albert Herring*), Colline (Puccini's *La Bohème*), Doctor (Barber's *Vanessa*), Somnus (Handel's *Semele*), Pish-Tush (G&S's *The Mikado*) and Jupiter (Rameau's *Castor et Pollux*). He can be heard on the Naxos label with Toronto's Aradia Ensemble. He has studied with some of the world's finest musicians including Marlena Malas, Roger Vignoles, Anthony Rolfe-Johnson, Russell Braun, and pianist/coach Martin Isepp. Upcoming performances include Britten's *The Beggar's Opera* at the University of Toronto's MacMillan Theatre. He is currently pursuing his Master's degree at the University of Toronto, under the tutelage of Lorna MacDonald.



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